

TRADE AREA DELINEATION

The City of Sanford generally functions as the commercial and governmental center for Lee County. Moreover, due to the absence of other cities of importance in the immediate vicinity of Sanford, the trade area of Sanford extends well beyond Lee County.

A generally accepted method for the delineation of retail trade areas for cities of less than 50,000 population is the application of "W. J. Reilly's Law of Retail Gravitation", which states, in general terms, that the attraction of a retail business center for any segment of the population is directly proportional to the relative size of that center and inversely proportional to the distance of the population segment from the center.

The Sanford trade area resulting from the application of Reilly's Law embraces a four-county area, consisting of parts of Chatham, Moore, and Harnett, and all of Lee County. The trade area so delineated takes an elliptical form. The area includes the communities of Pittsboro, Bennett, Robbins, Carthage, Goldston, Haywood, Cameron, Manly, Vass, Swan Section and Lillington. The total population of the area, including that of the City of Sanford, is about 67,000.

Sanford's trade area as delineated by Reilly's Law for 1940, 1950, and 1960 shows very little change. The western and southern parts of it have stayed fairly stable. By 1950, it had expanded both to the north along the route to Pittsboro and to the east toward Coats. During the fifties, the Sanford trade area decreased to the north but maintained its previous gains on the eastern side. The elliptical form of the trade area can be explained by the influence of the cities of Raleigh and Greensboro to the north and of Fayetteville to the south. There are no corresponding larger cities to the east and west.

Newspapers are the prime advertising medium of central areas; therefore, their circulation provides an effective means for trade area delineation. It has been proven that the influence of a commercial area declines sharply beyond a city's primary newspaper circulation area. For purposes of comparison, the circulation area of the Sanford Herald, as defined